

Reviewing the information literacy literature



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- Team included us + Pamela McKinney, Dr Philippa Levy, Professor Sheila Corrall, David Streatfield, Sharon Markless
- A number of research reviews funded by the HEA
- Different approaches to different review questions, but generally focus on 1997-, English language, reported on research (with adequate description of methods etc), tertiary sector

Review Questions

What concepts and models of information literacy are currently in the HE discourse and applied in practice in HE?

- Curriculum statements (SCONUL, ACRL, ANZIIL etc.) all cover finding and evaluating
- More divergence on skills/knowledge concerned with what do with information once you have found it
- Implicitly or explicitly geared to task-focus, purposive searching
- Aspects upon which is agreement (finding/evaluating) are most often dealt with in the literature
- Similarly, some conceptual areas which emerge in “conceptions of IL” research (e.g. understanding social value of IL) not often described as subjects of study

Review Questions

- What are the key trends in students' and academics' behaviour with information resources?
- What, if any, is the evidence for a link between IL and learning, including learning approaches and outcomes?
- What pedagogical approaches are being adopted in the teaching and support of information literacy, including e-learning?
 - What conceptions of teaching information literacy, amongst academic staff, librarians and others, have been discovered through research? Is there evidence of disciplinary difference?
 - What evidence is there that different pedagogic strategies are appropriate at different levels (e.g. 1st year vs. final year)?
 - What is the research evidence about approaches that are being adopted by librarians to support (i.e. rather than teach) development of information literacy [by academics], using Information and Communication Technologies?
 - **What is the research evidence on pedagogical collaboration between librarians and academics, and other learning support professionals, in teaching information literacy?**
 - What evidence is there of institutional strategy impacting on curriculum design to develop information literacy?

Review Questions

- What evidence is there of the impact of specific pedagogical approaches on the student experience?
- What is the available research evidence of the impact of libraries on the student learning experience?
- Relationship between themes



Collaboration



Pam McKinney

Webber & Johnston, March 2007

Observations

- A good deal of literature which mentions collaboration
- Some very interesting examples and observations of interventions involving librarian + academic
- **But** not much literature that researches the **collaboration** (as opposed to the impact of what was taught)
- e.g. might describe results of a pre and post test following a class where a librarian and academic were involved and then say results proved success of collaboration
- Perhaps being allowed/invited to collaborate is seen as success in itself?

Observations

- Collaboration or partnership can mean many things
- Both parties may not recognise it as “collaboration”
- Interesting that collaboration & need for it seems to crop up more in librarian authored works than in academic-practitioner educational literature
- Julien & Given (2003) investigates (mostly negative) views of librarians on relationships with academics
- Some comments seem validated by e.g. comments in McGuinness’ research
- However, librarians view of “problem” predominates

- Ivey's (2003) small qualitative study identified 4 essential behaviours:
 - Shared, understood goals
 - Mutual respect
 - Tolerance and trust
 - Competence & communication
- Also identified need for shared understanding of IL
- "Intensely collaborative" approach (Brown and Duke, 2006) contrasts both engaging with learning design as opposed to guest lecturer approach
- Chimes in with more anecdotal observations in other papers and presentations
- Compatible with some of the "tips for collaborating"?
- Atkins and Frerichs (2002) indicates changes in conceptions on competence/role can emerge through working together

Useful would be ...

- Case studies: mapping exactly who did what, examining documentation, perceptions of all those involved (librarian, academic, students)
- Reflections from the partners, using a specific approach
- Student perceptions of the impact on their learning experience
- Action research where the focus is the collaboration
- Investigations into what different kinds of collaboration take place
- Probing specific aspects (e.g. trust, change in attitude through collaboration)



Impact of specific pedagogical approaches on the student experience

Observations

- Obviously, wealth of literature, with many interesting examples and advice from experience
- Tends to be focus on particular technique, method and/or particular intervention
- Much less which discusses overall learning design and approach to teaching
- More investigation of direct experience of librarian-mediated IL through specific learning tasks and activities (rather than experiences of learning IL through other channels and experiences)
- But also evidence that librarians are moving closer to defining their role as educators

Some further issues

- Preference for quantitative & quasi-experimental research designs (see also criticism by Given , 2007)
- Detailed investigation of student conceptions and experience not common (though possibly more of a “gold standard” in educational research)
- Blurring of research and programme evaluation
- Pre/post tests described, but...
- ... frustratingly, often not enough detail about what went on **between** tests to make sense of the results (not like measuring effects of drugs on disease....)
- Lack of detail generally in describing course context & exactly what happened
- Also gaps in describing methods – medical librarianship articles better here!



Sharpe et
al, 2006

“There appear to be little value in another review which asks ‘do blended approaches improve learning?’ and which will predictably give an answer ‘it depends’.” (p8)

Sharpe et al identify valuable features of course design

- Honest analysis of successful/ less successful features inc. student perceptions
- Undertaking design as a team, enabling integration of learning material
- Making underlying pedagogic principles explicit in course design
- Studying course over a period of years
- Above are not aspect addressed so much in research articles concerning IL education

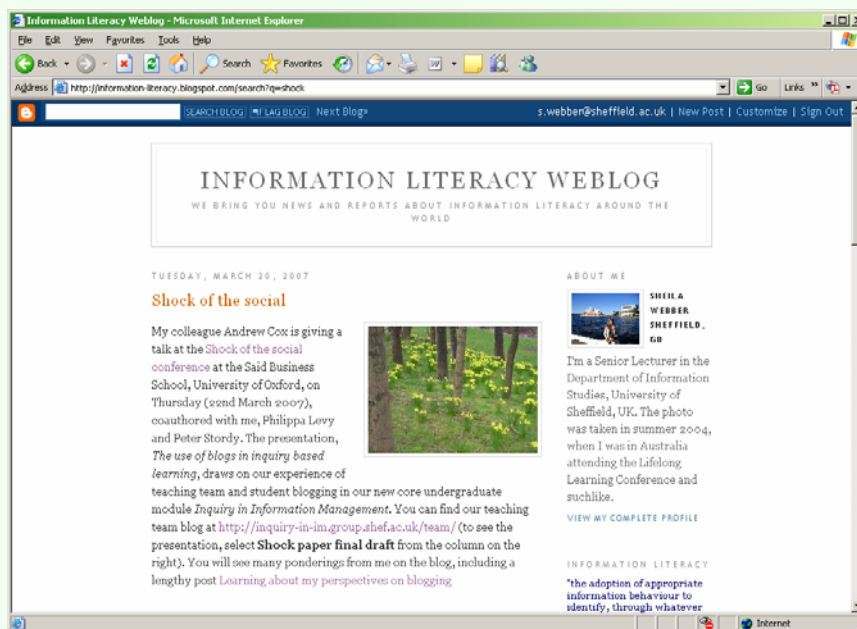
Final thoughts

- Some research seems more about marketing than education, and as such is obviously useful for that purpose
- Less focus on quantitative “proof”, for educational research
- Getting people who are involved to discuss/reflect on nature of learning & teaching
- Engage with wider range of learning and teaching theories and ideas & information behaviour research (from study of article references)
- Could make research articles more useful simply with more detail on research methods (and structured abstracts!)

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Articles: collaboration

- Atkins, P. and Frerichs, C. (2002) "Planning and implementing a teaching workshop for librarians." *College and undergraduate libraries*, 9 (2), 5-20.
- Brown, J. and Duke, T. (2006) "Librarian and faculty collaborative instruction: a phenomenological self-study." *Research strategies*, 20 (4).
- Ivey, R. (2003) "Information literacy: how do librarians and academics work in partnership to deliver effective learning programs." *Journal of academic librarianship*, 30 (2), 116-121.
- Julien, H. and Given, L.M. (2003) "Faculty-librarian relationships in the information literacy context: a content analysis of librarians' expressed attitudes and experiences." *Canadian journal of library and information science*, 27 (3), 65-87.

Articles: impact

- Given, L. (2007) "Evidence-based practice and qualitative research: a primer for library and information professionals." *Evidence based library and information practice*, 2 (1), 15-22.
- Sharpe, R. et al (2006) *The undergraduate experience of blended e-learning: a review of UK literature and practice*. York: HEA.